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TO Department of State

755.11/8-150

RECD AUG 4

FROM : The Hague No. 219 August 1, 1950

REF : Emb. Des. No. 183 of July 27, 1950

ACTION EUR

INFO DCR OLI IE

SUBJECT : CONTINUING PRESS COMMENT ON RETURN OF KING LEOPOLD TO BELGIUM

The royal problem of Holland's closest neighbor continues to interest Dutch editors and to be felt in Dutch politics.

Liberal ALGEMEEN HANDELSBLAD reports in its July 28 issue that, according to strong rumors circulating in Geneva, King Leopold has decided to abdicate in favor of his son. The paper understands that the rumors were originated by Catholic circles in Brussels, and gives them some credence in view of the fact that leftist agitation has threatened Belgium with economic chaos. Also supporting the rumors, the paper believes, is the news that Princess de Rethy and Princess Charlotte do not plan to come to Brussels.

Anti-Revolutionary TROUW attacks the Dutch Socialist organ HET VRIJE VOLK for its support of the Belgium Socialist Party and for its recent prediction (see Emb desp. No. 183) that if the King refuses to abdicate, a revolutionary movement will sweep him from the throne. Trouw declares that King Leopold returned to his throne in a perfectly legal manner and that this development should have been respected by all. If bombs and political strikes are to be used to enforce somebody's political views, it says, democracy is in a very poor state.

Catholic DE TIJD makes the same point, in even more vigorous terms. "It cannot be expected", the paper asserts bitterly, "that the moral authority of the democracies will be respected in the world when democrats themselves are the first to break down that authority. It is terrible to see the excesses of which the Belgium Socialists are capable...to revenge themselves for the fact that they have been unable to impose their will on the Belgian people by parliamentary procedure. It is expecting too much to think that people who play with democracy in such a manner would be capable of defending it when it is attacked from the outside".

755.11/8-150

For the Ambassador:
William T. Nunley
William T. Nunley
Attache of Embassy

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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